

Catch And Release

Mike Bowdenchuk, USDA Wildlife Service Program Director, released two immature golden eagles in the Utah West Desert in Tooele County recently. The eagles, a male and a female, were relocated to the area 60 miles west of Salt Lake City, after being humanly trapped in Summit County. The two were responsible for killing several young lambs in the Chalk Creek area, and were subject to removal by Wildlife Services. "Our goal is to protect both the wildlife and livestock in Utah's grazing areas," said Bowdenchuk. "While a lot of what we do results in the death of livestock predators, we look for the opportunity to release as many animals back to the wild as possible," he added.



The release of these two eagles is an example of such a philosophy. The pair of young golden eagles were on their seasonal migratory journey northward through Utah, and took advantage of a feeding opportunity with a sheep herd in Summit County.

Bowdenchuk estimates the two eagles killed one baby lamb each per day while they were in the area.

Relocating the birds west of the Great Salt Lake encouraged them to continue their flight north, and out of the state.

Wildlife Services trappers captured the eagles using a soft, rubber-coated leg traps that are designed to not injure the bird's legs.

Wildlife Services is a partnership program between the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food and the USDA. Its goal is to protect Utah livestock, and the economic base it represents, in an environmentally sensitive method.



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FOOD COMPLIANCE INVESTIGATORS CAUTION PUBLIC ABOUT MISLEADING AND DECEPTIVE MEAT SALES

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food meat safety investigators caution consumers to think twice about buying bulk meats when the deal seems “too good to be true.”

With the summer barbecue season moving into full swing this Memorial Day, investigators caution the public to be wary of some door-to-door meat sales or “bait-and-switch” offers from other retailers.

“This is the time of year that we see illegal and deceptive offers of meat sales in our state,” said Doug Pearson, Regulatory Services compliance investigator. “It is illegal to sell meat by the package instead of by the pound,” he said.

Pearson also says it is common to see advertisements for ultra-low meat deals that are intended to lure consumers in, only to see them pressured into buying much higher priced meat.

Pearson advises consumers to make sure they know the per pound cost of the meat they’re buying. Ask the salesperson for a written invoice itemizing the USDA grade of the product and the cost per pound. Also make sure the product is frozen solid if planned for extended storage and check grade, cut and the net weight of the product.

Consumers who have questions about meat sales are encouraged to contact Doug Pearson at (801) 538-7144.

Example of sales ads that promise low prices, but that can end up costing consumers more than they believe they’re paying for.



PET AND LIVESTOCK OWNERS ALERTED THAT TICK SEASON IS HERE



The flea and tick season is upon us now and pet and livestock owners are advised to take a few precautions to protect their animals. Ticks can carry diseases that affect both animals and humans such as Lyme disease or Rocky Mountain spotted fever



Prevention

Ticks are found in every region of the country and there are many different types. These bugs live in the bushes, grasses and woods that surround our homes, and attach themselves to animals and humans as we come in contact with the foliage.

Dog and cat owners whose animals run free through wooded areas are advised to check their animals routinely for ticks. This is done by running your hands through their coat, feeling for small lumps. Keep your pet’s hair length cut short, so the presence of any ticks can be easily detected. Use tick and flea sprays or collars.

Horse and other livestock owners are advised to use the standard treatments for grubs and parasites, and are advised to contact your local veterinarian for more information.

If you or your family members hike in wooded or brushy areas, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants to protect against coming in contact with ticks.

Human Health Risks

The Utah Department of Health reports that Lyme Disease is very rare in Utah; most Utah residents with Lyme Disease acquired the disease while traveling outside of Utah. There has been no increase in Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever or any other tick-borne disease in Utah this year.

For more information visit: <http://health.utah.gov/els/epidemiology/epifacts/rmsf.html>
Or <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/spotlight/>



2002 AGRICULTURE CENSUS OFFERS A SNAPSHOT OF UTAH AGRICULTURE

The 2002 USDA Census of Agriculture counted 15,282 farms in Utah in 2002. These farms averaged 768 acres in size and sold \$1.1 billion worth of agricultural products - an average of \$73,000 in sales per farm. The Census was conducted by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. According to USDA definition, a farm is any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year.

Every five years the Census of Agriculture takes a snapshot of America's agriculture. This picture is an invaluable tool for assessing trends and determining current needs of farmers and ranchers at the local level. The census provides comprehensive, comparable statistics for every county in the Nation. For example, according to the 2002 Census, Utah county ranked first in the state in number of farms with 2,046 while Box Elder county was number one in the state in total cropland at 335,315 acres.

The 2002 Census results show changes in Utah agriculture over time since they can be directly compared to past Census results. For instance, the total number of farms in Utah counted in the Census decreased 3.3% from 1997, and land in farms acreage dropped 2.3%. However, the average value of sales per farm increased 30.0% from 1997.

The 2002 Census revealed other interesting facts about Utah's agriculture, such as: Only 2.5% of the farms in Utah had more than \$500,000 in sales, yet they accounted for 63 percent of the value of all sales. Forty eight percent of all farms had sales of less than \$2,500. The average age of the principal operator was 55.2 years old and he or she has spent an average of 19.9 years on the present farm. 24.7 percent of all farm operators in Utah are women.

These facts and more for every county and state are now available for the 2002 Census of Agriculture on the NASS website at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>.